

Chap. XX] BHAKTI OR REVERENTIAL Lovi? TO GOD. 467

His unaided powers completely worsted,
and his mind quite distracted
by biting regret for indiscreet trespass, the
captive wistfully casts
about for suocour. Whither shall he turn, to
whom shall he resort
for relief ? With penetrating
psychological* insight, the poet-seer
sets forth the entire process of this
spiritual struggle—the painful
awakening, the hard self-straining, the
frustration, the prostration,
the supplication, the rejuvenation, the
redemption. As yet, it is
mere regret, not repentance—only the
sense of injury to self, not of
wrong to the Lord. The mind, however,
turns shortly towards God—
again not to confess guilt but to elicit aid.
In sublimes! metaphy-
sic set to the melody of sweet verse, he
betakes himself to the praise
of the Deity whom he would adore and
serve. But in the harrowing
hour of spiritual tribulation, poetry or
philosophy is but a make-shift
substitute for religion, the soul's intimate
converse with the Over-Soul.
< Fancy " observes a Sufi, < The madness
of the man who, wnthin full
view of the blood-thirsty lion, still loiters
outside the castle, shouting
pious ejaculations. " You are my safety, my
shelter, my protection,
my strong-hold ; I take refuge in you, in
you I take refuge ! "
" Fool, flee for thy life, rush indoors, if thou
wouldst be safe and secure."
The voice is ringing with classic phrase,
but the heart is writhing with
an aching void. In the midst of the full-
throated pean, Gajendra
collapses with an anguished moan. < He
that is reported to be

everywhere and accessible to all
petitioners—exists He or exists He not?"
Let us take note that this is not the mood of
saucy denial or of crazy
doubt; it is the dazed infant's cry amidst
the gloom which has veiled
the Mother's face. ^t Where Oh, -where is
He of whom they postulate,
that He is available unto all, high or
humble, that He protects the
meek and the lowly, that He turns His eye
of compassion on all that
approach Him in straits, that he listens to
the laments of all that
carry their afflictions to Him ? Will He not
hear, see, mind, draw
nigh to this forlorn 'one? " From cheery
praise to heart-splitting
groan, it really means for the sin-smitten
soul one deeper dip into
purgation and thus one closer step to
redemption. The situation, is
unutterably excruciating ; annihilation
itself would be mercy!
Gajendra is stupefied like one engulfed into
a dreary chasm—above
starless, around breathless, underneath
bottomless. But it is evidence
of Divine Mercy that in the spiritual as in
the physical world the
darkest moment of night ushers the first
glimpse of dawn into sight.
Whisperings from witnesses around and
intimations from the ' storied
past ' behind—God in Nature and God in
History—are sure to shed a
gleam through the gloom, an ethereal ray
from the heavenly name—
which points to the secret door opening
inward, out of the dungeon